



Request for Proposal Grant Writing Consultant (Remote)

Overview

Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS) provides free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers including seniors, veterans, unemployed workers, immigrant youth, children and their families, mothers in prison or jail, small business owners, and now COVID-19 frontline & healthcare workers. Our programs reach underserved communities in New York City – inclusive of racial and gender identity, disability, veteran, and citizenship status – and last year benefited 4,359 clients and their household members.

VOLS was founded in 1984 by NYC Bar Association leaders to fill a void left by severe federal cuts to legal services. Since then, we have nimbly responded to emerging public crises such as the 1980s HIV/AIDS epidemic or the 2008 financial recession. Our track record and trusted partnerships position VOLS to ably stand by vulnerable New Yorkers during today's COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath. Our staff of 20, including 13 attorneys, works with volunteer lawyers from over 70 law firms and companies to multiply impact. We partner with 210 community groups to ensure that our services can accessibly respond to local needs.

Consulting Opportunity

VOLS seeks a grant writing consultant, available up to 20 hours/week for an initial period of three months, to increase our capacity to submit proposals to prospective institutional funders, primarily independent foundations and corporate philanthropies.

Since the onset of COVID-19, VOLS has seen an increase in need for our free legal services, in particular through our re-launched Unemployed Workers Project, new COVID-19 Frontline & Healthcare Workers Initiative, and our Small Business Legal Relief efforts. While we have been able to secure new, short-term funding for pandemic-related foundation grants, we meanwhile are experiencing and anticipate continued challenges with maintaining level funding from government sources and law firms during the economic crisis.

The grant writing consultant's main responsibility is to write proposals and proposal-related communications and, if appropriate to support VOLS' capacity expansion, to assist on writing reports or renewal proposals due to current funders. This contract is managed by Jon Grabelle Herrmann, VOLS director of philanthropy & development. The consultant will collaborate with relevant VOLS team members depending on the funding goal, including the executive director and directors of VOLS projects and initiatives. Most VOLS foundation and government funds are restricted to one of VOLS's eight legal programs, which serve a diverse range of constituencies and issues of interest to mission-aligned donors. Some funders will be asked to support organizational capacity and development.

The consultant will serve as a thought partner with the VOLS team as we identify and assess new institutional funding opportunities. The consultant will participate in funder research and, depending on their capacity, utilize research tools provided by the consultant or to be obtained by VOLS.



Proposal Elements

VOLS' seeks proposals that allow our team to assess and compare qualifications, fit, and pricing structure. An exact scope of services may be modified or negotiated in discussion with the leading consultant who emerges from our decision process. The proposal should include:

- Cover letter or written presentation, 2 pages maximum, that answers:
 - How does your experience match the purpose/ criteria outlined in this RFP?
 - How will you manage this engagement to set up VOLS for success?
 - What is your approach to pricing for this engagement? What is the fee structure for 10-20 hours of weekly output over three months, including an hourly rate for any additional work beyond that scope, and noting any different rates if multiple people are working for the consultant on the VOLS client account?
 - When are you available to begin, and what are any relevant scheduling considerations?
 - What additional information should VOLS consider about the consultant's capabilities?
- (2) writing samples, removing any proprietary or confidential information.

Desired Qualifications

Demonstrating the following skills and experiences adds value to your application and VOLS' success:

- You can effectively write and communicate in order to align VOLS' goals with the interests of prospective funders who award grants typically ranging from \$25,000 - \$250,000;
- You have experience working with one or more of VOLS' served communities (small businesses, low-wage workers, immigrant youth, health care workers, seniors, veterans, women in prison) and an ability to "study up" on issues that fall outside your experience;
- You have a track record in applying a racial equity lens to your writing, research, relationships, and strategy, in order to best align with VOLS' own mission and organizational goals;
- You are flexible, self-organized, and not shy in supporting VOLS' "small but mighty" team as we push through assignments amidst a fast-changing external environment.

Proposals are requested by 4pm on Thursday, July 23, by email to development@volsprobono.org. Any questions submitted to that email address by 4pm on July 20 will be shared with all applicants. Proposals may be reviewed on a rolling basis, including after July 23 if a vendor is not yet selected. Proposal materials will only be reviewed within the VOLS team as part of this RFP process. Issuance of this RFP does not commit VOLS to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to the RFP. Anticipated hourly rate is \$55-90, depending on experience and final project scope.

VOLS welcomes interest by both independent consultants and agencies with past experience serving nonprofit clients of a similar size (~\$2M annual revenues). We encourage applications from minority-, women-, veteran-, and/or LGBTQ-owned businesses or consultancies.